

Tribal Collaboration Outcome Area Working Group
July 28, 2023
Meeting Transcript

Welcome everybody to the fourth of the state's digital equity and BEAD Tribal Collaboration Outcome Area Working Group meetings. We're really excited to have you, to be in participation with all of you today. I'm gonna. Can we go to the next slide, please. Cole Przybyla, can you please do the housekeeping? Yeah. A few housekeeping items today. We will be posting the recording of this meeting, the slides, and transcripts to the Broadband For All portal. For best viewing experience and visibility of the ASL interpreter, please go to the top right, under the view, and use the side by side speaker view. Closed captioning is available. Choose the closed captioning on the toolbar below. Finally, in chat, we invite everyone to use that tool. Please share your name, pronouns, organization, and title, and where you're joining us from. And finally, during some of our community discussion portions of the conversation, please use the reaction tools, which is the little smiley face down there, and there's a raise hand feature. Next slide. Today's agenda, we'll have a welcoming, an opening panel with some of our peers, a summary of key takeaways of our prior engagements, a community discussion, a conversation about the Digital Equity Ecosystem Mapping Tool and public surveys, and next steps, and close. Scott, will you now introduce our panelists and share an overview of today's panel. Yeah, thank you, Cole. Could we go to the next slide, please? So we're really pleased to kick off today's meeting with a panel of folks that have really been instructive, as we've put together, help to expand and understand the state's learnings and sensitivities on how we can partner with Tribal Nations on broadband and digital equity and general connectivity efforts. And we'd like to kick off the meeting here with Secretary Christina Snider-Ashtari from the Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs. You know the slide here represents that. Following her we've invited Chairman Shane Ratchford from the Cold Springs Rancheria of Mono Indians. Kenneth Holbrook, we've invited him to come, but he may have had a conflict. And then we're really excited to have Vanessa Cresci, the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program Federal Program Officer for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. And then we'll close with Matthew Rantanen, who is the Tribal Advisor to the Golden State Network, which is the Department of Technology's third party administrator. So if you will, if we could drop the slides, team, can we welcome Secretary Snider-Ashtari, please. Thank you and good morning, everyone. I know it's an early morning on a Friday, so happy to be with all of you. I think many of you have seen me multiple times in these spaces, so I'll try not to repeat myself, but do just want to thank you all for your ongoing engagement. I think that I've had the privilege of being here now over 5 and a half years in this role. So have seen kind of the arcs of Tribal engagement, have seen the arcs of where the state has become more thoughtful about engaging Tribal communities, and really, have been on the other side of when people had a limited understanding of what equity really meant and are seeing how it's being really thought about especially as applied to Tribal communities who have unique

circumstances, unique histories, and a unique place here in California. So I thought, what I'd do today, you know, I think what you'll hear as, throughout the course of today's presentations is that we're at the end of a beginning stage. But that doesn't mean that we're at the end of everything. So we're gonna need your engagement throughout this whole process and really encourage you to continue to be in that space. But I did want to reflect a bit. We, my office, about a year ago, turned into the Office of Tribal Affairs within the Governor's Office, and we thought about what our mission was, and I just wanted to talk a bit about it today and kind of frame our meeting in that space. So our mission is to elevate issues of mutual importance to Tribal Nations and the Governor's Administration, as informed by meaningful Government to Government consultation and collaboration. In implementing the Governor's policy priorities related to Tribal Nations, Native communities, and Indigenous Peoples, our office continues to work with Tribal Nations, to improve government to government relations, advance justice and equity for Native Peoples, explore remedial actions to address past atrocities, expand Tribal stewardship of ancestral lands and natural and cultural resources, promote visibility of the rich diversity and history of California Native cultures, and partner with Tribal governments to bolster sound and sustainable economic development in California Indian Country. So that's quite a lot of things, but I think at a baseline, what this process is doing is bringing all of those things to the forefront. And I think we're seeing in this process a real effort to deploy broadband in a way that will create equitable economic and community development opportunities for Tribes throughout the State. We saw over the course of the last 2 years, and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, where inequities in energy and broadband deployment have severely challenged the ability for some Tribes to engage in cooperative discussions or consultations with the State, in addition to creating gaps for telehealth, engaging with loved ones, or getting critical resources and information to communities. As we've seen more job shift to telework and we also see people shifting more toward what they value most at home in a community, we see both a Tribal workforce that might live on Tribal lands unable to do so with a lack of broader community supports and infrastructure and off-reservation workforce that's unable to take advantage of potential telework opportunities with Tribes that might lack more robust IT capacities. Over the course of this planning process, Tribes and California Native People have increasingly spoken up and shown up as the state and federal governments have asked what you need to be made whole in these spaces, and the state and federal governments are listening in a real effort to meet your communities where you're at. We have gone throughout the State. We've also offered some virtual opportunities which I think can be confusing if you're trying to deploy broadband in an equitable way. But we really do want to get out to community as this process rolls out to make sure that you're all equitably engaged. California's recognized the critical need to view circumstances through that lens, that not all communities are in the same position, whether because of infrastructure gaps, historical inequities, or dispossession of culture or cultural differences. And the policy initiatives that we continue to seek or to support seeks to be responsive to those differences. So again, I want to thank you all for your engagement in this planning process, and as we move forward in the next stages of

these processes, we hope that you'll continue to engage and to let us know you're seeing gaps. But I am very encouraged by the fact that we've had so much engagement from the Tribal community up to this point, and I think, just from my perspective, I've seen where there was almost no discussion or siloing of Tribal interest in the space of broadband and broadband deployment. And now we're in a space where we're thinking critically about how we can really get to your communities and create opportunities for you to support your own needs, priorities, and people. So again, I'm really glad to be here. Glad to hear further discussion. And looking forward to next steps, so I'll hand it back to Scott. Thank you, Secretary, and just wanted to say that you've been such a, you and the Office have been such strong allies on broadband and you know, Tribal affairs. You know, both as members of the Broadband Council, but dating back to a couple of years ago, when we created the you know, under your leadership, the California Tribal Broadband Connectivity Partnership Summit. And you know your office continues to you know, be a central player, and helping, as you said, kind of bring along the other state agencies. And you know, fostering that meaningful engagement with our Tribal Nation partners. And I think what you underscored is this is such an important moment in time, coming out of COVID where, you know, we have this multi-level, you know, the federal, state, local leadership, policy, and funding to promote connectivity that you know, to bring folks together in this space, you know the state folks and the NTIA folks, is really important, with our Tribal Nation leaders and partners. So just very much extend our gratitude and thanks to you. So next up I'm trying to look. Chairman Ratchford. Team, can you help me. Chairman Ratchford, have you been able to join? I am gonna call an audible here. I know folks have been having a little bit of difficulty joining in today. I'm gonna maybe mix the order a little bit here and. Vanesscia Cresci from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, would like to invite you to, you know, provide, you know, some comments about the federal state partnership, and any new developments that are going on at the NTIA. Yes, thank you. Good morning. I'm calling in and joining from outside of Sacramento, California. Thanks for giving me a few minutes on the agenda. We are excited to announce, yesterday, the availability of nearly 1 billion dollars in funding to expand Internet access and adoption on Tribal lands. This additional funding was made possible by the bipartisan infrastructure law. This is the second round of Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program funding and we will make approximately up to 980 million available for Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities for the deployment of infrastructure on Tribal lands, affordability programs, telehealth, and distant learning initiatives. We have already awarded about 1.7 billion in funding to 191 Tribal entities. Since the program started back in 2021. We will be expecting to make funding in the ranges of 1 million to 50 million for Internet infrastructure deployment projects. And between 100,00 and 2.5 million for adoption and use projects. More information about this, including the notice of funding opportunity, can be found on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Thank you very much. Thank you so much Vanesscia, and that's really important. I know, you know, in all of our engagements over the last couple of years that we've done in partnership with NTIA, that you know, many of the California Tribal Nations are looking to the Tribal Broadband

Connectivity Program and many have been, awards have been made to the state of California, and so we look forward to working with the NTIA and the Public Utilities Commission and other folks to help support applications to that process, and we're very happy to share as much information as we can about the NOFO and the process. So really appreciative of the good work and partnership that you know, we have with the NTIA and how it's making a meaningful difference here in California, for the State and for Tribal Nations, cause you're managing so many different programs You're welcome. And we appreciate the collaborative relationship as well. I will put in the link, where you can find more information about the funding as well. I'll put it in the chat. Thank you so much. Now, Cole, Can you help me with the order of the next speaker? I think I'd like to call on Matt Rantanen, who is that, you know, many of you know. He interacts in a lot of different capacities and relationships in Tribal connectivity, has been a long-time advisor to the California Broadband Council, and then now is the Tribal Advisor to the state's third party administrator. I'd like to bring you in Matt, and kind of wondering if you can kind of speak to us about, you know, the importance of the ongoing collaboration and the various structures that we've created over the last couple of years. And what that means, because I think you've always have like a really interesting perspective and view on this. Sure, thank you, Scott, and thanks everyone. And then I would just like to follow up with Vanessa's comments and ask if she could put in the chat when the proposed final announcements for first round will be because I know there are some Tribes in overlap. And that question's been posed to me by several Tribes. Whether or not they will find out in the next, you know, a couple of weeks, so that they can know if they need to apply for round 2. So if you could put that in the chat, that'd be wonderful for folks. Yeah. So you know, in my capacity, currently as Vice President of Tribal Broadband at Golden State Net, and working with CDT directly on the Middle Mile build. But then also, you know, wearing my Southern California Tribal Chairman's hat occasionally as the Director of Technology there for 22 years, and interacting with CPUC and all the other granting organizations, both state and federal. You know, this is one of those times in history where it's all happening now. So you know, the State has done a wonderful job of doing outreach and then giving the opportunity for Tribal consultation, one on one, as is expected by the Tribes, and when Tribes want that level of interaction, they can certainly have it.

It's a period in time when, some of the Tribes are very advanced in their telecommunications development and some Tribes are just barely getting started. So I think the biggest piece of this is that you know you're not doing this alone. Everybody is attempting to solve these problems and include their communities. And then the digital equity piece comes in, you know, as you start to build. And after you start to deploy and teaching the community and engaging the community on how broadband can enhance your life, not be a hindrance to your life. And a lot of Tribal communities missed this opportunity during the Stimulus Act and Obama's Administration, where the money didn't flow to Tribes for this opportunity. A few Tribes got a hold of it. The Tribal Chairman's Association in Southern California got a hold of it and ran a two-year process where they were doing digital equity and engagement with community

members to help better understand how to use Internet. But I think this time around there is enough direct focus on supporting the Tribal communities in their efforts to do outreach and include their individual Tribal members. It's an extremely important to make sure that your efforts in building digital infrastructure and physical infrastructure also include the components that bring in your community and bring up the level of education around technology for your community. One, so that they have the use of the resource, too. So they don't get taken advantage of, some of the pitfalls that exist on the Internet. And then, you know, learn to build that into their future life path, if you will, to make things easier. Remote locations, are you know, are no stranger to reservation. Reservation, you know, is almost synonymous with that. So some of those resources that you have to drive all the way to town for that are at your fingertips with Internet. So you know, really important for enhancing people's lives and making things easier for folks on the reservation. There's a wonderful host of programs to the Public Utilities Commission, and if Ken were here he would be highlighting that. Excuse me. And I think you know that with a number of grants for the technical assistance and the you know the follow up to building out last mile programs that are at the CPUC, you know, Tribal leaders and Tribal technology, people need to be engaged at all fronts. So please don't hesitate to, you know, do any outreach to the CPUC, Golden State, and CDT, for any of these opportunities, and we'll help get you aligned with those pieces of the puzzle that you may need to put together. So thank you. Thanks, Matt. And yeah, you brought up so many, I think critical points. Is, that number one, there is a lot of folks and entities from the federal government to state government, and then other entities within the state broadband ecosystem, like Indian Health Services, etc, that are really committed to partnering with Tribes to support, you know, connectivity across the board. So from the access and the infrastructure piece to the affordability and promotion of the Affordability Connectivity Program where it's available to participating providers on Tribal lands. And something that is really important is you know, helping Tribes communicate that to folks who might live off reservation, or are members of Tribes that don't currently have land. And then the digital literacy piece. And so I know that's critically important. And I think you know, one thing that you brought up is something we've heard throughout the process is that there's so many different funding programs like, that's the good news. The challenge is that you know, potentially for the Tribes that need the funding from those programs the most, that there is like limited capacity. And I think it was really, and even subject matter expertise. And you've talked throughout this process in many different formats about the boot camps that are going on. And I'm wondering because, you know at times, there's, you know, different folks who are joining at different points. If you can talk a little bit about how the boot camps have helped kind of expand you know, understanding and subject matter expertise. Sure, thanks. So Tribal Broadband Bootcamp is something that came about as Covid was still problematic on reservations in 2021 , I think July was the first one. We had a lot of requests from Tribes for information about broadband, and how to manage broadband, and how to apply for some of the NTIA funding, or how to manage their NTIA funding application and some of the bigger money pots that were, you know, being suggested at

the federal government and then trickle down through the state as well, and we didn't have a way to go on reservation because they were all blocked right? So nobody was allowed to Tribal on to reservation for fear of transmitting Covid. So we ended up having a an event at my house in Southern California, which I have some land, so we are able to be socially responsible, spread out outdoors and have a sort of a ground breaking first event with 29 folks, I think there were 7 Tribes represented. And to date we have done 8 of those about every couple of months, couple of months and they have included 246 Tribal members from 46 different reservations building broadband. And the overall theme. It's amazing. Because going to National Congress of American Indians and the FOA and you know, reservation economics. I feel like all Tribes know each other, but that it's really not the case when you get down in the weeds of building broadband, because some of those department heads, or some of those people that are being charged with building broadband don't get that national access to other Tribes. And were really feeling like they were doing this by themselves, and they didn't know anything else that was going on. So when they got together in this room they started sharing experiences and opportunities and solutions and stories. It was amazing. It created this human network of people that are all doing the same thing at different stages and development, but could share experiences with each other. And effectively, I can step out of the middle. So these people all have access to each other on a platform that's promoted through the boot camps. It's like an online chat facility, and they are able to communicate with each other throughout the year about different issues. Hey, we're short of, you know of conduit for fiber. And you know, does anybody have some? Or Hey, we're thinking about this vendor, you know. Is it a good, is a good solution. Hey, this is a solution we had for mountainous regions with trees. But you know, how do we deal with you know this type of environment or this type of geography? And it's really changed, you know, that group's perspective on what their opportunities and resources are. So really an eye-opening experience it covers you know, business models, how to manage outside vendors. It covers, you know, some of the legal aspects of things that covers, you know, FCC stuff. It covers you know, grant opportunities and funding opportunities, both regional state and federal, and then some of the foundations that are on a national level. And then it has a, you know, a hands on fiber day. You get to splice fiber and realize, you know, demystify fiber in front of yourself, you know. Just it's amazing. And then you get a chance to, you know, build a wireless network link as well, and understand the properties of that. So it really puts people into a space where they have their head around what they're dealing with, and then, you know, there's a bunch of different directions to go from there. But they get a, that gives them a platform to stand on and learn from everybody else. That's been building mistakes, and experiences so that they're not starting from ground 0. They're starting from, you know, a level where they're like, okay, I get this. And now I just need to, you know, get some certified folks and get access to maybe an engineer and start building desktop plans and things like that. But they know their pathway at that point. And then there's other resources supplied to them through the boot camp afterwards. So. It is an interesting opportunity. The next one is next week in Mohawk, Akwesasne, New York. And then

we'll be back in California near the end of the year, probably November, maybe December. Maybe one of the Pomo Bands, because we have a lot of interest from one of the California Bands of Pomo Indians and then potentially back in Southern California. So thanks. Great thanks, Matt, and again, the camps present such an a great opportunity to you know provide support and foundational knowledge across the board of broadband, and you know, some of the many learnings that have been shared with us, are about you know, at the high level with all of this broadband funding, you know that focus on sovereignty and ownership, and a desire to be perceived as owners not necessarily as customers. And so a credible component is like building capacity and helping you know, to support you know those Tribes with those you know, goals that you know could be achieved through leveraging this funding. So thank you, very much appreciate it. Looking at the chat, thank you, Vanesscia, for answering Steph's question, and I see Cathie Buchanan. I'm wondering if we can, you know, when we get to the community discussion, if you could reiterate the point you made in the chat. But now it gives me great pleasure to introduce our next speaker and panelist. Over the last year the state's tried to, the Department of Technology and the Public Utilities Commission and the Secretary's Office and the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development have tried to create a process for as many folks to engage when they can. So we've had these virtual convening's. And then we've had some in-person group consultations. And we met Chairman Shane Ratchford from the Cold Springs Rancheria of Mono Indians and Chairman Ratchford, I think you have joined now would love to invite you to come and you know, share from your, you know perspective, you know the barriers, the constraints, the challenges, and how you know your Tribe is approaching broadband and connectivity in general. Hi, I'm Shane Ratchford. I'm from Cold Springs Rancheria, Tribal Chairman. How's everybody doing today? Great. Great thanks. Yeah. Right now, we just hired a grant writer to help me with these kind of things, with where we need the funding and help and get to see how this is done. And where we're at and Cold Springs, we just had another mishap where something happened to our Internet at Tribal Office, and it went down. And the telephone company, Ponderosa, said they'd be right out to work on it. Well, it's been already 3 weeks, and they still haven't came out. They keep putting us off. And that's one of the reasons why I feel we really need broadband in our remote area on our reservation. And it's happening to us right now. And I really want to, I want to go to the boot camps. And I want to get involved with this program. And that's I mean, I'm just kinda upset about the Ponderosa Telephone Company right now. It's awful. If we had an emergency here, or we're trying to conduct business at our office and we can't because of these problems. And I know we have a cell phone tower funding that I don't, I gotta look into that. But I'd really like to get the broadband going is what I want to have. After hearing the Chairman of Tule River speak about his cell phone tower, I don't think it's going to be a good idea for us to have one. I'd rather do broadband. Yeah. And thank you, Chairman, I know that that was really, you know, compelling when we met down in Porterville. You know, because throughout this process we've heard about the need not just for service, like for infrastructure and service, but to have reliable and resilient

infrastructure given, you know the critical nature to support essential services and communications and disasters and you know, I think that you really eloquently echoed a lot of what we've heard back, you know, from some of the other Tribes. It's mentioned, that, you know, of the sheer number of Tribal Nations in California that folks are just in various states in that, along that process and capacity. And so we were really honored to meet with you and look forward to continuing to partner with you and your Tribe to the extent that we can to leverage these resources. I remember, maybe about 13 years ago they brought a fiber optic line through Burrough Valley, and they buried it underground, big old orange plastic pipe, it's a bunch of cables. And I think it came within like 8 miles of our reservation. But I'm I don't know if anybody up there that's even using it right now, you know, where I've seen it put in. But I know it's close. I hope it's close. I hope that's what I saw. It might make it a lot easier for us to get it to our reservation. Got it, and I know we were talking a little bit about it, I know, you know, from an impact standpoint, you know, definitely the, you know, finding a way to leverage this funding to create, you know, greater connectivity solutions for the Tribe is just gonna, or in partnership with the Tribe, is gonna have a substantial difference in you know the life experience. So is there anything else, Chairman, that you wanted to share about? How you guys are looking forward, ahead in in any specific ways that from your unique perspective, the state or the federal government can continue in this period of enormous funding to support Tribes like yours? Well, that's why pretty much, we hired a grant writer. We haven't had one in a while to look for the funding that you made available for us down at, when we did a collaboration with Tule River in Porterville. And right now I'm just trying to look into finding some honest vendors, you know that we know would be good to have to help with this project and help us in how we're gonna get the cable, I guess. And we're just trying to find out what's available. Well, thank you, Chairman Ratchford. You know, both the Public Utilities Commission and the Department of Technology and other state agencies are, you know, really stand ready to help and support where we can. Matt, I see your hand raise. Did you want to respond to something the Chairman said? Yeah, I just wanted to offer up a thought. The state and the CPUC can't recommend those to work with. They do have a long standing understanding of who is working with who and can probably provide some information of who's working with other Tribes that you could do outreach to those Tribes and find out how that experience is, and vet those vendors on, you know through the other Tribes. So that is, that is an option I know CPUC has done that in the past, and a lot of us know who's working with who so happy to share that information, and then you can out do outreach to the Tribe to find out how that's going. Yeah. And thanks Matt, from just going that way, because it was a very specific comment that was given at the Porterville event. And it was also something that we've heard throughout our engagement over the last 2 years that there is some vulnerability out there for Tribal Nations when interacting with vendors who would support you know, federal or state funding programs, and that above and beyond, say, the Better Business Bureau. You know, verification list, that as we build out the state's, digital equity plan or the BEAD action plan, that creating some kind of a, a structure and framework, and we don't

necessarily know what that looks like that could have potentially a qualified vendor list or a, you know, a reputable vendor list. That that would be something that could really, you know, support the ecosystem of California Tribal missions. Thank you. Thank you very much, Chairman Ratchford. It's always a pleasure, and we appreciate you coming in and joining in and sharing your unique perspective. So I do believe that is the conclusion of our panel. I know Mr. Holbrook from the PUC, you know, wanted to come and speak. One thing that I would do under the auspices of sort of mutual aid is, I know that the Public Utilities Commission was very grateful for all of the feedback and engagement that they received throughout the process and in drafting their initial BEAD 5 Year Action Plan, which is currently out for public comment, so as follow up to this meeting, will be sending along some information and would definitely wanna make sure that folks here on this call could have the ability to review what they put down and provide public comments. I also wanted to share, I don't think they'll mind, their gratitude that this process and the phone engagements that it occurred over the last month is, yielded I think, 20 to 25 requests for formal consultations on broadband related issues for them, and I know they're very excited to meet and establish you know, those one to one consultations that Secretary Snider-Ashtari mentioned were so critical. I think with that the one thing that I would say from the Department of Technology's perspective on you know, Broadband For All and on the Middle Mile side and on the digital equity plan development, we're just incredibly honored by the extensive engagement. And the you know. I think the generosity of knowledge and experience that California Tribes have shared with us to help us understand how we could both be sensitive to and supportive of Tribes as we work towards, you know, leveraging the resources we have to work on the programs that we're doing, and we're very committed as well to engaging in as many different ways as possible on meeting folks where they are. And one of my roles within the California Department of Technology is as the Department's Tribal Advisor. So you know my information and my staff's information is included in the slides that we'll send out, and we would extend that you know, invitation for a formal consultation on, you know, either the Middle Mile or you know the digital equity plan. And we're gonna I think segue to the to the next portion of our meeting. And team, can we bring the slides back up? Yes, one second. Thank you. And again wanted to just thank our panelists for help tee up the, this conversation of our fourth Tribal Collaboration Digital Equity Working Group. So can we go to the next slide, please. You know, part of this process has been for us to gain a deeper understanding of the barriers to digital equity. And as I had mentioned, this is our fourth Tribal Collaboration Working Group, and we've also done the 17 regional workshops at which there was representatives from Tribal Nations. And then, you know, I think, 25 to 30 individual interviews with Tribal entities. And then the in-person consultations. And I'd like to invite Zach Ferguson, who is a graduate student at the UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy, who helped do a lot of our research and put together a paper on this is. Zach, would you like to walk through maybe the barriers that across the board, just give us a high level, you know this is not an exhaustive list, but this is you know, in broad terms what we've heard from folks thus far. Yeah, absolutely. Thank you, Scott. Like Scott mentioned, this is, you know what

some of the beginnings of the learning that we've had from this engagement process through the different public meetings, we've hosted the, one on one consulting more direct engagements, and then just interviews that I've done with various folks. And again, not an exhaustive list, but kind of a brief overview of what's really stood out to us. And then, understanding also that all of these, you know, while they represent barriers to digital equity, they all lead to the then disparate outcomes in education, health, workforce, economic development and other outcomes. And so to start kind of just generally, you know, the existing infrastructure and supporting infrastructure and lack of service availability that a community might face, particularly a Tribal community or reservations, is really significant in where you may be starting from in terms of being able to deploy broadband infrastructure. And then, later on, you know, achieving actual digital equity. Whether or not you have power and roads to begin with. We also understand Tribes and Tribal communities have a heightened vulnerability to disasters. And we heard a little bit about that mentioned, you know, from our panelists. Also the lack of affordability of services and devices. It's a huge factor, you know, you can have broadband deployed. You can have the infrastructure, but if you can't afford the devices or use the service, you know, you're still not able to get to the level of digital equity and access that we need. Another thing that's come up for us that we that we've seen is that Tribal benefits don't extend to off reservation members, and so kind of understanding that fully when we're thinking about how the state's going to design programs and how we can be helping facilitate the use of both state and federal programs is really significant in deploying resources. Thinking about, you know, and Matt mentioned this earlier, just that digital literacy and kind of the use and adoption piece of achieving digital equity. And how sometimes, if someone hasn't used the Internet or used devices much before, you know, there can be some fear there. And so the importance of empathetic teaching and training and kind of overcoming that fear and really achieving initial literacy in order to achieve digital equity is key. All to say, we understand that trust and persistent poverty are also huge barriers, not just to digital equity, but to a variety of outcomes that Tribes and Tribal communities may be trying to achieve. And particularly as the state, you know, understanding that through these engagements and and through the relationship building that the state has to do, trust is really one of the the big end goals there, and building trust between the state and and Tribes and Tribal communities. And finally staffing, and again, this was was talked about a little bit earlier, but staffing and broadband subject matter expertise can be varied and limited, you know, depending on the Tribe, depending on the community, understanding, you know, the myriad of of things and and priorities that Tribes are are facing and and deciding what to prioritize. Where broadband digital equity may fall on that list is is gonna vary. And then, broadband expertise like Matt mentioned you know, fiber and and a different jargon and different, you know things you have to understand in order to to deploy broadband infrastructure is really significant, and so ways to boost that capacity, both in terms of staffing, and this in in terms of of subject matter at least, and knowledge is is really key to to helping create the administrative structures that are needed to to get digital equity throughout our communities. And I'll turn it back over to Scott and he'll talk

about some of the the things we're thinking about in terms of strategies for moving forward. Thank you, Zach. I appreciate you going through and and just want to continue to understand that we know that both our relationship with Tribal Nations and communities and that our understanding of needs and how we can support is, like, there's not going to be a central point in time where we just have all the answers. So this is what we're hoping to do is demonstrate, you know that what we have heard and learned, and to share it back to make sure that we got it right, which is gonna be the you know, one of the follow ups in our community discussion, but part of the process has been to on Broadband For All in general, but on the digital equity planning and the BEAD planning has been to fulfill the mission that was given to us by that the NTIA, which was, you know, understand, the the unique barriers for the different populations, and then develop strategies with input and feedback from those folks. So if we can go to the next slide, please. So what this slide represents is again a high, level summary and and distillation appearing of the an enormous amount of feedback that we had received from you know our meetings and our consultations, and I want to make sure to to give voice to these because we're gonna want to ask you to make sure, you know, to check us, to make sure we got them right. But the first recommended strategy is to just expedite infrastructure deployment, affordability and adoption efforts across the board, and that relates to both getting the funding programs out, building the state's open access Middle Mile network. And you know, being mindful of future funding plans that they need to get out quickly because there's an urgency to the need. The second was to really pair broadband deployment, with other infrastructure efforts like roads and power and build in resilience. And so we heard that a lot across the State and at the in-person consultations, and through these meetings that you know. In some places broadband funding can't be leveraged unless there are roads or power and so finding a way to better synchronize both the funding opportunities and the build out efforts so that they can be more streamlined and get out to where the need is. The third recommended strategy was something that we heard loud and clear on multiple fronts but definitely at our in person is that it's critically important that the state and entities doing infrastructure projects utilize Tribal cultural monitors to advise on those projects from a cultural sensitivity standpoint, but also from a job development standpoint as well. The fourth was that partnerships just in general are vital to achieving digital equity and should be incentivized. So whether it's partnerships between the State and you know, or the Federal Government, and the Tribal Nations or partnerships between Tribal Nations and private sector, you know, philanthropic or community based organizations or other service based organizations that that is a really effective strategy. You know, the the fifth one definitely that partnerships must include comprehensive engagement and meeting folks where they are in a way that's sensitive to the constraints. You know so getting out there and and meeting people in the physical community and not just doing these virtual convening's. The the sixth point is is really something that we want to stress that we heard is that in all of these efforts to be sensitive and mindful to both Tribal sovereignty and Tribal digital sovereignty, and that those kind of twin focuses should be promoted in all state programs. The the next one is about initiatives should

couple of broadband access with business development and other outcomes related to health and education. We've heard numerous examples of Tribes you know in various parts of the State that you know broadband is a key to some of the other top priorities, like healthcare supporting, you know, health centers that are, you know, on reservation or closer to the populations, supporting mental health, education, etc. and also to support the economic activity that you know, Tribes are engaging in, you know whether it's a variety of businesses or other things. So that was you know, a big takeaway, I think. The eighth one that data can play an important role in identifying and understanding how residents are currently accessing services. We understand, we've kind of heard both sides of that that's the data is both you know, a good thing to more efficiently target funding and deploy services, but that it has to be done sensitively in a right way, given the you know, historic inequities and injustices. And then there is a you know, an apprehension for folks on Tribal lands to want to put themselves on a map somewhere that might expose them to future harm. So definitely heard that. And I'm thinking through how we can incorporate that into our future plans. And I think again, the last, but not least of what we learned, because this is really a distillation of you know, a lot of substantial feedback, is that ongoing assistance and support are needed to take advantage of the multiple, the federal and state programs. And so you know, we've learned that and experienced that you know this is a complex and multi-dimensional issue of, you know, connectivity and closing the digital divide that includes access and infrastructure and network deployment. And it includes affordability programs to make even the the infrastructure and service that's deployed affordable for folks, including being able to obtain devices. And then the the digital literacy piece and tapping into programs to find digital navigators. We've heard a lot of folks like the Hoopa Tribe that you know, are are deploying digital navigators to help people get connected. That, those things are often funded by these programs. And the programs are so multiple that it's hard to navigate and find out you know what steps you need to go through. So we've heard about the tremendous value about the existing technical assistance programs that are going on at the PUC through the California Advanced Service Fund, and then for Local Agency Technical Assistance program that was established as part of the the Senate Bill 156, the Federal Funding Account. And as good as those are, there's still this potential foundational gap in capacity to get to where you can, you know folks can apply for those programs and then tap in to that. So things like boot camps, we've heard, you know, find a way to fund and structure more boot camps and some folks have even referenced creating or or putting together a a digital navigator program for Tribal entities that can kind of help do that, be a trusted entity, it can help, you know, provide a needs assessment and help connect the dots potentially provide grant writing assistance. So you know, some really you know excellent strategies came back from our engagement. And you know this forms the basis of a lot of what will find its way into both the digital equity and BEAD plans. And so Cole, I think we can go to the next slide. Or our production team. Thank you, Fiona. So I think that the other thing that we're trying to learn on, and and this is a self-deprecating joke, is to talk less and to listen more. And so we we give you our commitment that as we continue to extend this

engagement, that will be better about you know, information dump, and more about listening and learning. But we wanted to make sure we went through this information, and to to make sure folks knew we heard and that we are doing our best to understand how we can shape our plans moving forward. So we'd like to turn over to the discussion to the community. If we could go to the next slide? And so what we'd like to use this time to really to help us understand is we tried to summarize the barriers that we've learned. So you know, for the folks in this meeting are there any additional barriers to broadband connectivity or digital equity experienced by Tribes and Tribal supporting entities that we did not cover. The next question would be, what strategies are missing from what we shared earlier, because we want to make sure we leave the room for those. And then the the third question is, is really for these strategies to be successful. What types of partnerships or assistance from the State and other organization is sought or needed. And so I'll defer to the team on how we want to do this. It might be instructive if we drop the prompts into the chat and then take down the slides so that folks can unmute their video and audio and and jump in. Please feel free to for folks to raise their hands. Cathie. Good morning. I'm with the Tribal Marine Collaborative up here in Crescent City and a lot of the Tribes that we work with have no funding to travel to these boot camps, and so on and so forth. They are absolutely strapped for cash. So and my question in the chat was, are these programs available to non recognized groups here in the state of California? Because I know a lot of the federal programs, they, we can't apply for them. And state of California is kind of so so on on granting funds to unrecognized groups. So and so how are the non-recognized Tribes going to be able to access these programs? Cathie, thank you very much for asking the question, and we we do continue to like, understand our the the the difference between, you know, the federally recognized Tribes that, the non-federally recognized Tribes, and even some of the cross border Tribes that you know, are out there. Yeah. Travel is a big issue and also eligibility for the programs. We understand that. I need to go back because I'm still learning about how those programs apply. But I saw Matt you had a hand up wondering if you had something that you wanted to to share in response to this. Yeah. So the applying to the state and the federal programs is is complicated if you're not a federally recognized Tribe for those specifics. As far as the boot camps are concerned there are about 10 full scholarships to travel with each boot camp that are funded by the funders that support the boot camps. So if you get your name and interest and and spell that out on the comments there's potential you can attend those boot camps under other fundraising efforts. Thanks, Matt. And Cathie, I think, the one thing I would want to say is that we're happy to talk more and and learn more about those specific challenges, and I would extend the offer to you know meet with, you know, myself and our staff, and particularly Zach to to learn more about that. So we'll make sure that our contact information is in that the follow up email. I'm wondering if I believe that you asked the an earlier question to in that in the chat. Did you want to give voice to that here, or do you? Sure my other question was because infrastructure is so extremely expensive and hiring private contractors is pretty much out of the question for a lot of the isolated Tribes, because, again, there is very little money, so does the State

or the Federal Government have crews, I know they have crews to to maintain infrastructure. Will the crews, can can the Tribes appeal to the State to use those crews so that we don't have to pay the consulting fees or the private cost? Because I know, I used to work for a private engineering firm, and I know their cost multiplier was at least 3 for anybody that was hired by a client, and we don't, there's no money to pay for that. Even municipalities and other organizations have a hard time paying for that high cost. [Inaudible] ...has crews that are specifically building that can be allocated. But again, would love to have a follow up meeting with you to better understand and and kind of talk through both questions you posed today and see how that can further inform you know next steps. Thank you. Oh, you're welcome. Thank you. So, Mandy Macias. I see a question in the the chat here. I'm happy to read it out loud, or if you want would invite you to unmute yourself and give voice to to your question. Yeah, I can unmute myself. [Greeting] My name is Mandy Macias. I'm a member of Dunlap Band of Mono Indians here in Eastern Fresno County. And my question was, specific to I guess the allotment lands and the some of the liberties given to the Tribes with allotment lands and Federal trust lands, with regards to funding that you know, even though they're non-federally recognized, which our community is, a portion of our Tribe resides on Federal trust land. And so I was wondering if there were some some parallels for the non-recognized Tribes that are securing, or that may want to secure financial support and funding to their residents, which would end, of course, on their Federal trust land. If there is something parallel to what the reservation Tribes might be able to do. Well, thank you for asking the question, and I would say, that is it, you know, relates to, you know, trust lands and land allotment that exceeds my my knowledge base. I'm we're happy to to take this down and follow up with you, sometime afterward, and and you know try to come up with the you know some kind of a an answer or direction there. Oh, no, that's that's great. I mean, it's just I'm jumping in. I'm I'm also an archeologist for the State. So we're looking at the projects on a broadband level completely differently. But you know the the the trust land, the reservation and then the recognized and the unrecognized Tribes, they're for very unique facets that we work with. So as a Tribal representative. You know I I'm always trying to figure out where we fit into the process and at the same time implement process. So I I figured I might as well ask the question, since you guys are online. Oh, absolutely. And we thank you very much. We're appreciative of for for bringing that into the space and and raising it for awareness and understanding. So, wondering, are there, wanna leave it open for more questions, are there any additional questions from folks either they would like to raise their hands and unmute and give voice to, remember any barriers that we might have missed, any strategies that we might have not heard correctly or any, you know, specific kinds and types of partnerships that folks have seen at work and that would want to make sure that we are considering. Just don't forget about the last mile, that's all I have. Thank you, Chairman. No, the last mile's absolutely critical. Miss Buchana. Can, if a non recognized Tribe were to partner with the recognized Tribe, can the non-recognized Tribe use the funding also? Interesting. I'm wondering. I think we might have to take that one back. Vannescia, you have an answer to that from the NTIA perspective, or? So I think for

TBCP, specifically, it depends on what you're applying for. So if, the NOFO defines eligible entities, so the eligible entities that can serve, who could apply, but also serve as the lead. If it's consortium, includes those that I listed in the the chat, but even if you have a consortium which is looking at a regional approach, you still, each of them still must be an eligible entity. So, for example, you have a Tribal organization, they may serve as the lead on behalf of several Tribal governments, the Tribal governments, all they all have to be an eligible entity which they are, since they're a federally recognized Tribal government. So there is some language on page 16, of the NOFO that talks about consortium applications. Thanks, Vanessa, and thank you, Cathie for another great question. I see Brandon Bettencourt, you asked a really interesting question, and I was wondering if you're in a place where you can unmute and ask the question, and and maybe just forward the conversation. I think part of what this process is about is not just what, you know how the State can work with Tribal Nations or the Federal government, but those other entities that are critical support partners to Tribes. And I know we've heard from a lot of folks in this process that if we ask the question, you know, what current broadband or digital equity work are you doing, if they're not working, and it can sort of leave an unanswerable question, but really like the proactive outreach Brandon from you, this week that it was kind of like this a-ha moment that, like I've been participating this, and I finally can see where we can participate in this process. So Brandon, love to invite you to kind of speak to that. I'm able to unmute. But I'm having an issue with my camera. So sorry about that. You got it. Oh, now we can see. And yeah, I guess. I mean, I think a lot of the conversations around this get into the the infrastructure and sort of that, that aspect of it which obviously is, you know, critically important. So yeah, it's taken me a while to figure out where an organization like Chapa-De, you know, primary care provider can fit in. But you know, we talked to lots of people every day about, you know, if they have an email address, if they have devices, if they have these things that we can help connect them to our our digital health services. And when they don't, there's not a whole lot of options and things for us to do about that or if they don't know how to use the technology, or if they don't have the right device, And so I I guess I could I see us as fitting in as as identifying those needs, and then trying to connect people to to to to services providers, whatever that can kind of, you know, help them get what they need, so that they can take advantage of of what we offer. But then also all the other things that that are that become available when you have access to the Internet, and you know how to use it. Yeah. And thank you, Brandon, that's I think, really, that's exactly how the NTIA was shaping and framing both how States developed the digital equity plan and they utilize digital equity capacity dollars is looking across the board like, how do we identify barriers for key populations? How do we develop strategies to overcome those? And how do we fund really at the at the regional and local level through trusted partners like you know, community based organizations services, organizations, even promotoras, if you will. And really from a digital navigation standpoint, using like or empowering health navigators or community navigators to be digital navigators. So really just thankful for that you know the the email that you sent us in advance of this kind of like seeing where you know what role you folks could play,

and and really given voice for I think a lot of folks that have been wrestling with this idea of how do we embed digital equity? And you know, broadband adoption, digital literacy training into our existing program. Yeah and kind of to further that I think, community health representatives are an excellent workforce that that that can be developed into digital navigators. But you know, they need they need training. They need other supports and things like that. And that's that's where, at least from my perspective, I don't know what our best solution is. Do we write grants ourselves to try to get you know, more more funding for positions and training? Or are there collaborations we can have with other grantees that already have systems in place, and maybe even already have some of the expertise, and then just could sort of train our staff. But yeah, there's just some some of my first thoughts on this. Yeah, well, thank you. And you're gonna see a lot of that in our draft digital equity plan that you know, utilizing capacity grants to do just that, employing both the train the trainer model, you know, local community representatives to be digital navigators, etc., so just thanks a lot. I know we've got some more items on the agenda. It looks like we do have a question, Mr. Carella, do you want to come off mute and ask the question here? Yes, thank you, Mr. Adams. Good afternoon to all, excellent presentation today, team. Question for Mr. Rantanen in his role with Golden State Network. I know the Golden State Network is handling the construction of California's middle mile. And we are actively working with the and in support of the Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians in San Diego County. We're aggressively pursuing funding for construction. But we're very interested in the timing, Matt, of when Golden State Network will be publishing final routes for Middle Mile network along Caltrans rights of way, so that we can propose connecting to those we think there's some advantages. Obviously, in the San Diego region, as you're well aware, EBKI is a member of SCTCA. So maybe you could give us some some guidance on timelines, on when those routes will be finalized, because that fits right into our TBCP application planning. Thank you to NTIA for publishing the NOFO yesterday. Sure, the the timeline. I'll do that first. So the timeline, everything is on the clock, because it's CARES Act funding, flowing through the State. So everything has to be allocated and assigned you know, essentially spent or contracted by the end of 2024, and it all has to be built by the end of 2026. Those those route confirmations the CDT is going through a finalization of routes right now, getting final things in place. There are cost shifts based on some, you know, outside factors that we're working in to try to make sure that we can build as much as we possibly can. I would say that the route that is closest to the Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians is probably the Interstate 8 Route and Sunrise Highway is not, as far as I understand, is not in consideration to be added back in it at at phase one of this map opportunity. So the the construction evaluation map can be found through the California Broadband For All. And you can see that map on the Internet. Now, that is the evaluation map doesn't mean it's finalized. But the Interstate 8 route is a very, you know, and a very solid route that that is very important. For a you know, a number of communities, high population densities throughout Southern California. So I would assume that that route does not go away. That's that's probably a a very good assumption for us. We'd love to, you know, connect

along I-8. I'll have to check the specific map, because if we can, reasonably confident, confidently assure that then that affects our TBCP application. So thank you, Matt. And you can connect anywhere, right? So there is, they'll do what's called a ring cut. If you have an interconnection point where you can get to a certain area, they will build in your connectivity there and provide a shadow vault for you to get access to that route at that location. So it's not like you have to meet one of the huts 50 miles away. You will be able to access that you know mid span. Right, I think GSN has periodic points, and we can connect to any of those. Any of those, and then there can be customized points. But it would be nice to know those ahead of time. You read my mind. Thank you, Matt. Thank you. Thank you, Scott, for letting me ask. Well, thank you, Mr. Carella. And I just wanted to add that just last week the Department of Technology's Middle Mile Broadband Initiative team provided an update on the both the optimization process and the kind of the phase one mileage map of the the total miles that was going to be that was being optimized. As that map gets updated to the the Middle Mile and Broadband Initiative website, it's all gonna be concurrently added to the PUC's Federal Funding Account website. We will send all of that information out to folks on this call, you know, for part of the the broader network of folks. Very good, and we are, we are tracking the Federal Funding Account and last mile initiatives as well, you know, as a possible funding source. So thank you, Scott. Oh, you're very welcome, and I want to thank everyone for their very thoughtful questions. And we're taking notes, and we'll follow up Cole, could you please advance us to the next portions of the the meeting, because I know we're running a little bit low on time. Yeah, I'd love to invite Rachna Vas from Broadband Equity Partnership to come talk about the survey and survey responses and call to action. Thank you, Cole. Hi, everyone. I'm Rachna Vas. Happy to talk about some of the surveys that are currently open for Tribal communities to complete. We wanted to understand some of the barriers that residents face across California in terms of broadband access, affordability and adoption. We created 2 different surveys to be able to do this. One is an organizational survey called the digital Equity ecosystem mapping tool. We began with this tool in May, and actually probably in April, and we issued it to all stakeholders that we've been in contact with across California. This includes State agencies, CBOs, faith-based organizations. We created a specific link, as you can see here on the bitly link below, we created a specific link for Tribes, because we really are very interested in understanding some of the great programs and services currently being offered in Tribal communities. And we want to understand what the resource gaps may be. This tool helps us to see all the programs and services that are currently being offered, and where there might be some gaps in these program and service offerings according to region, or according to county or according to Tribe. So please help us by promoting this tool to all the organizations that you may know of, we would encourage Tribal governments to complete this, Tribally focused organizations to complete this, but please, Tribal health facilities as well. Scan the QR code, take down the link, help put this out there and get us some information. I would like to say that. Mr. Bettencourt, you're a wonderful example of a portion of this tool that accommodates questions like yours. We actually have a section

in the DEEM tool that answerers can answer and say, I'm not currently in the digital equity space, but I'd like to be. And so what you brought up just now is the prime example of how a Tribal health facility may not consider itself to be in the digital equity space. But it's definitely in a prime position to be able to do this a promotion of broadband access and affordable programs to patients that come to the health facility. So definitely complete the tool if you haven't, we'd really be interested to learn more. Next slide. The other survey that we issued is the online public survey, this targets residents. It's specific to California households. We wanted to understand the barriers to access affordability and adoption based by all California households, and we've created a specific one for Tribes to complete. But we want to begin with the general survey that we that we issued. We expected a target of about 10,000 responses, and we were overjoyed when we received over 40,000 responses. As you can see, San Diego received, San Diego actually put us over the top with over 12,000 responses, just for San Diego County alone. So many thanks to everyone who participated in this survey, we actually had quite a few entities that helped us push this out through very effective text campaigns that includes SANDAG in San Diego and AARP that targeted our aging population in the State of California, and through its membership programs to get the survey out. Next slide. So as you can see, the largest share of responses came from people age 60 and over, thanks to AARP's very effective campaign of pushing this out. And we also received a large share from ethnic or minority communities. You will see closer to the the bottom that we did receive responses from over 500 residents from Tribal communities. But we need, we need to know more. We know that there are unique barriers based by Tribes. And we need to understand what those barriers what those issues are, and we need to hear from you. So please push out the survey. We're going to give you the link in the following slide. But we really need you to push this out because this this data allows us to really do a deep dive at a very granular level to understand what barriers are being faced at the household level by communities across the State. We were also thrilled to see that we had a lot of participation from individuals with disabilities, and individuals with limited literacy and language barriers. We offered the survey in 14 languages, and every single language was accessed via the survey. So we were, we were thrilled to be able to make this a fully accessible audio enabled survey that as many residents could access as possible. Next slide. The Digital Equity Public Survey's online, right now, specifically for Tribes, we've left the link open for Tribal communities to complete. There is a paper survey, but it's very limited in the number of questions that are. So we highly encourage you to use your mobile phone to access this survey and send it out to many Tribal residents as you can to get the word out. We really do need to hear from Tribal residents about what issues they're facing, what barriers they're facing, so that we can incorporate this in a in a comprehensive State Digital Equity Plan. If you have any need for us to be able to walk through the the survey or the DEEM tool with any member of your Tribe, give us a call, reach out to us at digitalequity@state.ca.gov. We'd be more than happy to help if there are any questions we'll be available to answer. Thank you. So, stepping in for Deputy Director Scott Adams, our final next steps for digital equity and kind of...apologies I thought I

was unmuted. Stepping in for a Deputy Director Scott Adams here, some of the next steps we'd love for you to look out for is that in late summer, early fall this year we will have the State Digital Equity Plan out, and so please be on lookout for a public comment period, open for 30 days for you to tell us if we got it right. Give us your feedback and make sure we're representing the Tribal communities in the appropriate way. Finally, we'll have a an October 25th Statewide Planning Group meeting with our 20 plus agencies. Our final State Digital Equity Plan that will go to the Feds is scheduled for the last quarter. So probably in that that December timeframe of 2023 we have AB 2750 that's related directly to digital equity planning that we are deadline by January 1st. And then finally, we're looking out into 2024 by that first quarter to really have a good understanding and ability to start heading toward capacity grants and funding a lot of the the ideas, the work, the strategies that are outlined in the State Digital Equity Plan. Next slide. Here is our contact. Again, I think there's been lots of great questions. Please feel free if we didn't get to your question, or there's some follow up ideas or barriers that you'd like to talk about. Please send an email to the team and finally, just want to thank you for attending the June outcome area working group meeting for the Tribal Collaboration. To stay involved with the process, please visit the Broadband For All portal, and finally, thank you for your continued engagement and participation in the State's digital equity planning efforts. Thank you again. Have a great Friday, and weekend, rest your day. And, Ana, if you could, please stop the recording, and end.